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PRESS RELEASE

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ADA, USDA URGES PRODUCERS TO COUNT THEIR FARMS ALONG WITH THEIR BLESSINGS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

(Phoenix, AZ) –As Arizona farm families gather this Thanksgiving to count their many blessings and give thanks for another successful harvest or roundup, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) – Arizona Field Office urges these producers to ensure their farm or ranch is also counted in the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The Census is a crucial tool that provides farmers and ranchers with a voice in the future of their community and operation.

“Thanksgiving reminds us that it can be easy to take for granted having a safe and bountiful food supply, “ said Steven Manheimer, director of the NASS Arizona Field Office. “But to ensure producers can continue producing crops and livestock, we need to provide them with the programs, services, and tools they need. To do this, we urge them to speak out and let their voices be heard by participating in the 2007 Census of Agriculture.”

Conducted every five years by the USDA, the Census is a complete count of the nation’s farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

“Thanksgiving is the perfect time to remind farmers and ranchers how important they are and how much the nation appreciates their hard work,” said Manheimer. “It’s also a good time to remind them that they have a voice and a responsibility to use that voice to make a better future. Tools like the Census enable farmers and ranchers to help shape the future of agriculture and their own local communities.”

NASS will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online. For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call toll-free (888) 4AG-STAT or (888) 424-7828.